

THE BUILDING OF THE KINGDOM

A DISCUSSION COURSE

ALMIRA F. HOLMES

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By

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THE BUILDING OF THE KINGDOM

I. THE WORLD TO-DAY AND OUR OPPORTUNITY

“Jesus was the initiator of the Kingdom of God. It is a real thing, now in operation. It is within us, and among us, gaining ground in our intellectual life and in our social institutions. It overlaps and interpenetrates all existing organizations, raising them to a higher level when they are good, resisting them when they are evil, quietly revolutionizing the old social order and changing it into new. It suffers terrible reverses; we are in the midst of one now; but after a time it may become apparent that a master hand has turned the situation and laid the basis of victory on the wrecks of defeat. The Kingdom of God is always coming; you can never lay your hand on it and say, ‘It is here.’ But such fragmentary realizations of it as we have, alone make life worth living. The memories which are still sweet and dear when the fire begins to die in the ashes are the memories of days when we lived fully in the Kingdom of Heaven, toiling for it, suffering for it, and feeling the stirring of the godlike and eternal within us. The most humiliating and crushing realization is that we have betrayed our Heavenly Father and sold out for thirty pieces of silver. We often mistake it. We think we see its banner in the distance, when it is only the bloody flag of the old order. But a man learns. He comes to know whether he is in God’s country, especially if he sees the great Leader near him.”—*Rauschenbusch, “The Social Principles of Jesus.”*

“We have seen our duty in too little terms; we have but dimly understood what the Master wanted of us. We are challenged to understand it now, the call is written in lines of fire on the map of the world; and we shall be renegade, indeed, if we do not now accept before it is too late, the opportunity for International Service

which the war reveals.”—*Fosdick, “The Challenge of the Present Crisis.”*

“A shining city, one
Happy in snow and sun
And singing in the rain
A Paradisal strain.
Here is a dream to keep
You, Builders, from your sleep.
O foolish Builders, wake!
Take your trowels, take
The Poet’s dream, and build
The city song has willed,
That every stone may sing,
And all your roads may ring,
With happy wayfaring!

—*Drinkwater, “The City.”*

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. . . . Behold I make all things new.”—Rev. 21:1-5.

THE WORLD TO-DAY AND OUR OPPORTUNITY

MATT. 3:1-6; MARK 1:9, 12-13; JOHN 4:31-38; JOHN 17:20-26

A. CONDITION OF THE WORLD.

1. At home—roused from its self-satisfaction to look at itself honestly and see its

a. Weaknesses.

- (1) Blindness to failure of existing institutions.
- (2) Illiteracy.
- (3) Physical disability of its people.
- (4) Extravagance and waste.

b. Strength.

(1) Sympathetic response to suffering.

(2) The growing organization of forces for righteousness.

2. Abroad—torn, ravaged by war, reduced to a need which opens to us great opportunities for building

a. By entering into a Christian internationalism.

b. By making living and vital for non-Christian lands the real things of Christianity.

B. THE GREATNESS OF THIS TASK.

1. In its range—world-wide. Matt. 28:16-20; John 10:16; Col. 3:11.

“It is too light a thing
That thou shouldst be my servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved of Israel:
I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles,
That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

—Isaiah 49 : 6.

2. In its demands. Is. 61:1-4; John 14:12.

3. In its vision and consecration. Rev. 7:9-17.

a. To see the principles that must govern us in our living together. Matt. 5, 6, 7.

b. To put them into practice. Matt. 19:29; Phil. 3:13, 14.

4. In its pioneer spirit of fearless adventure. Heb. 11:8-10.

“O young Mariner,
Down to the haven
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam.”

—Tennyson, “Merlin and the Gleam.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does the abundance of self-knowledge that we as a nation and as individuals are in possession of to-day, open up to us great opportunities for building the Kingdom of God?
2. How can we conserve and use those forces of strength which were available during the war?
3. Can public spirit and religious feeling do as much for us as fear does in time of war?
4. Are we as individuals responsible for our Internationalism being Christian? What does it mean to have an international mind? Provincialism has been one of the besetting sins of the United States. Can a Christian of to-day be provincial?
5. What are the real things of Christianity which we want to make living and vital for non-Christian lands? Even though we know what they are and experience their reality in our own lives, how are we going to make them real to the people of countries to which we never go?

II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“Evidently we have in this Kingdom of God a great challenge to every man and woman whose instincts rise above the mere level of keeping alive in this world. Its service is offered as the biggest opportunity that faces any human being.”—*Harris-Robbins*, “*A Challenge to Life Service*.”

“The Kingdom of God is a master fact. It takes control. When the Kingdom becomes a reality to us we cannot live on in the old way. We must repent, begin over, overhaul the values of life and put them down at their true price, and so readjust our fundamental directions. The conduct of the individual must rise in response to higher conceptions of the meaning and possibilities of the life of humanity.”—*Rauschenbusch*, “*The Social Principles of Jesus*.”

“What a challenge that flings to America! In this hour she is great of purpose, noble and unselfish in ideals, humanitarian in aims. Her passion is democracy—an even greater democracy than she has herself known—for all the struggling world. Her first line of defense dies for it. Will she train her second line of defense to live for it? Home and church must answer, and any student of American child life knows that they should answer at once and as a unit, for childhood is an easy prey. . . . America, generous of spirit, has fallen into the weakness of the generous and good-hearted, she has been careless and wasteful. She has played the prodigal with her childhood, but now she must waken and face fact.”—*Slattery*, “*The Second Line of Defense*.”

“We are challenged by this war to a renovation of our popular Christianity, to a deep and unrelenting detestation of the little bigotries, the needless divisions, the petty obscurantisms that so deeply curse our churches, to a new experience and a more intel-

ligent expression of vital fellowship with God. Unless we can answer that challenge there is small use in our trying to answer any other. We must have a great religion to meet a great need.

“He must have a callous soul who can pass through times like these and not hear a voice, whose call a man must answer or else lose his soul. Your country needs you! The Kingdom of God on earth needs you! The cause of Christ is hard bestead and righteousness is having a heavy battle in the earth—they need you!”—*Fosdick, “The Challenge of the Present Crisis.”*

“Wherever are tears and sighs,
Wherever are children’s eyes,
Where man calls man his brother
And loves as himself another,
Christ lives!”

—*Gilder, “Easter.”*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

MARK 1:14-17

A. ITS NATURE—WHAT IS IT?

“It is the order that ought to exist to realize the greatest good for humanity. God knows it and wills it, and it is for us to discover and establish it. It is the reign of God.”

B. WHERE IS IT?

1. In the world, growing quietly. Matt. 13:31-33.
2. In the hearts of men. Luke 17:20, 21.

C. WHO IS IN IT?

Matt. 7:21-23; Rev. 7:9-10.

D. FOUNDATIONS.

They have already been laid by prophets (teachers of social righteousness), apostles (founders of the early church), and all the unnamed saints and martyrs, and all the humble followers of Christ. They laid the foundation; on it we build. 1 Cor. 3:10, 11.

E. GROWTH—Reasons for slow growth.

1. Permeates slowly. Matt. 13: 24-30.
2. Few laborers. Matt. 9: 37.
3. Hidden talents. Matt. 25: 14-30.
4. Lack of self-sacrifice. Matt. 19: 16-24.
5. Little vision. Matt. 23: 13-17, 23, 24.
6. Lack of faith. Matt. 17: 14-20.

F. CHARACTER—A moral and spiritual Kingdom.

For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. Rom. 14: 17.

“Thy Kingdom come” means the Kingdom of God. “The laws of the Kingdom are the laws of God, the expression of character and purpose. Jesus Christ came into the world not only to show God’s fatherly character, but to make plain his will for human life.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What relations have various life occupations to the forwarding of the Kingdom of God in the world? How may a person use his business or profession to help the Kingdom? What can the home do to help bring the Kingdom? On what has the distinction between sacred and secular been based? Is it justified?
2. Is poverty a necessary evil? Why are people poor? Does Jesus throw any light on the problem of poverty?
3. How can we measure the value of a person?
4. What are the real causes of spiritual unrest? Can these be satisfied? How?
5. Does a social concept like the Kingdom of God gain anything for its practical efficiency to-day from being ancient, and from being religious? Will such a concept ever be effective with the masses unless it is essentially religious?
6. In our missionary work, do you think only of the saving of souls of people, or do you think of the possible contribu-

tions that they can make to the civilization of the world?
On what ground have nations justified the exploitation of
the weaker people?

7. Is a person likely to hear a call to work among a people
whose needs she does not know? How can we know the
needs of the world?
8. Does it show good judgment to keep on working in a place
where the tangible results are small?
9. Can we rest satisfied if we are bringing the Kingdom only to
those at home? Have we discovered how we may help to
bring it also to those far away?

III. THE FAITH OF THE BUILDERS

“The faith was once given to the saints and once for all; and though men will understand it better from age to age, it is still the old faith of divine love and human duty.”—*Speer*.

“A working faith is not a task, but a gift, not a burden that weighs men down but joy and peace and strength that girds for the task. It does not say ‘This is the minimum that you must believe in’; rather, ‘This is a life that you may have.’ Not what we must believe to be a Christian is proclaimed ‘Good News’ but rather the God in whom men might trust and from whom they might have life.”—*Rall*, “*A Working Faith*.”

“O God, Thou who hast taught us to trust in Thee as our loving Father, open our hearts to share that larger faith which Thou hast for all Thy children of every age. Give to us faith to do everything, to plan everything in terms of the coming of Thy Kingdom, till the littleness of our knowledge is lost in the greatness of Thy love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

“‘I am the True Vine,’ said our Lord, ‘and ye,
My Brethren, are the branches,’ and that Vine,
Then first uplifted in its place, and hung
With its first purple grapes, since then has grown,
Until its green leaves gladden half the world,
And from its countless clusters rivers flow
For healing of the nations, and its boughs
Innumerable stretch through all the earth,
Ever increasing, ever each entwined
With each, all living from the Central Heart,
And you and I, my brethren, live and grow,
Branches of that immortal stem.”

—*King*, “*The Disciples*.”

FAITH OF THE BUILDERS

HEBREWS 11

A. WHAT IS IT? Heb. 11:1.

1. A quality of mind.

“Faith is the quality of mind that sees things before they are visible, which acts on ideals before they are realities, and which feels the distant Kingdom of God to be more real and attractive than the profitable present. But a great and firm faith is the product of a lifetime of prayer and loving action. Light is sown in the righteous and if we would gather the wisdom of life and grow from knowledge to knowledge, advance from mystery to mystery, we cannot begin too early to become grounded in the faith.”

ILLUSTRATION.—Daniel, the image, the stone—Dan. 2: 31-35. Hebrews keeping the faith, in Babylon, in spite of fiery persecutions—Dan. 3. What debt of gratitude will future generations owe to the Armenians, who in these years have kept themselves loyal to their faith?

2. One of the abiding things. 1 Cor. 13:13.

B. ITS REACTION ON THE INDIVIDUAL.

1. Frees him from fear. Ps. 55:18, 23.

ILLUSTRATION.—Disciples on the water, in the storm, waken Jesus. The water is stilled.

2. Empowers him who has it. 1 John 5:4, 5; Matt. 6: 24-33.

“Fear paralyzes—faith empowers.” Peter is paralyzed by his fear, in the judgment hall; later, on the shore, and later still at work in the world, Jesus’ faith in him and his answering faith in his Risen Lord fill him with power. Mark 14:66-72; John 21:15-19; Acts 4:13-21.

3. Makes life joyful. Ps. 27:6.

4. Believes in the ultimate triumph of righteousness. Ps. 118:1-6.

C. THE FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH.

1. Continuity of faith. Heb. 11:39, 40; 12:1, 2.

“The fellowship of faith is not bounded by the earth. The New Testament believers not only held but vividly apprehended that the whole family to which they belonged in Christian communion was ‘in heaven and on earth.’ . . . The mark and seal of their fellowship is that they *kept* the faith. When others despaired, lost heart, and deserted causes on which man’s welfare hung, they kept the faith. When mysteries perplexed their minds and discouragement, to human vision, was more rational than hope, they turned from sight to insight and they kept the faith. When new knowledge, half understood, disturbed old forms of thought and multitudes were confused in uncertainty and disbelief, they kept the faith.”—*Fosdick, “The Meaning of Faith.”*

2. Communion of saints. Rom. 1:11, 12.

All faiths are social. 1 Cor. 4:7.

“For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Alleluia!

“O blest communion, fellowship divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.
Alleluia!

“From earth’s wide bounds, from ocean’s farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Alleluia!

—*How.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do we love to sing the hymns and songs of the people of God in other ages even when they do not express our own thinking?
2. Read Heb. 11:39, 40. How do you explain, “They all died in faith not having received the promise, God having

prepared for us some better thing, that they without us should not be made perfect”?

3. Can a Christian face the world situation with more poise than a non-Christian? Why? Have great leaders of men and of nations been men of large faith? What was the secret of Jesus’ peace and hope?
4. What do we mean by the phrase “a working faith”? To what extent is faith a part of ambition and ambition a part of faith? Can ambition be expressed in terms of faith?

IV. THE BUILDERS' FAITH IN GOD

Psalm 95: 1-6; Isaiah 40: 12-26.

"The essence of religion is the conscious presence of a living God in the hearts of men."

"God is the object of our faith."

"Can we know a personal God? How? First comes a conviction that he is real, then comes a venture, a surrender to these as that which is worth while. Then comes the knowledge far broader and richer than our first vision, at its best something big enough to satisfy our life, and strong enough to hold it. Here is friendship, love. We only know as we dare. The great treasures of life, truth and loyalty, and love and rest, are never known from the outside. They belong to those who love. They are known only from within. The treasures of life have come to those who dared.

"Think of God in terms of the fairest of all human beings in Jesus Christ. See the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

"Said an American college student now a soldier in France, 'I feel somehow as if everything is all right and God and I understand each other. I reach out and touch Him and know He is there.'

"By practising the presence of God, we come to feel Him as a part of our ordinary life; and soon we find that all our life is God guided and God protected and this brings us peace within though wars may rage without."—*Fiske, "Finding the Comrade God."*

"God, who at sundry times in manners many
Spake to the fathers, and is speaking still,
Eager to find if ever or if any
Souls will obey and hearken to his will:

"Who, that one moment has the least descried Him
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Does not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that are,—

“Ay, amid all men bear himself thereafter—
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise,
Dumb to their scorn, and turning on their laughter,
Only the dominance of earnest eyes!

“Gentle and faithful, tyrannous and tender,
Ye that have known Him, is He sweet to know?
Softly He touches, for the reed is slender,
Wisely enkindles, for the flame is low.”

—*Myers, “St. Paul.”*

“Eternal God, our Maker and our Father, Thou hast opened our eyes to see Thee in the beauty of Thy world, in Thy revealed word, in the lives of Thy children and through Thy still, small voice in our hearts. We worship Thee for Thy utter holiness and purity which has reached us and found us. Amen.”

FAITH IN GOD

A. A GREAT GOD. Ps. 104.

“As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold, I will build me a nest in the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God; as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh grass sends to the sod,
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God.”

—*Lanier, “The Marshes.”*

1. In power. Is. 40:28-31.
2. In holiness. Is. 6:1-12.
3. In love. Luke 15:3-7; John 3:16.

B. A GOD WHO NEEDS US TO WORK WITH HIM. 1 Cor. 3:6-9; John 15:1-8.

“In the stress of these crisis days, if men discover a new sense of God’s reality and his presence, it is a woeful waste of spiritual forces unless this experience brings fresh power into our lives, a deeper devotion to humanity. We gain this new sense of power just as soon as we make the crowning discovery that we may be co-workers with God in all his purposes for our lives.

“God is forcing the world forward, and we ought to be alive to God in the glad recognition and participation in this forward movement.”—*Fiske, “Finding the Comrade God.”*

C. A NEAR GOD, THE FATHER GOD. Ps. 121; Matt. 6:7-9.

Made known to us by Jesus. John 14.

“It is because our Father God is like Jesus in his character that we love Him. When we know Jesus Christ, we discover the personal God, for He reveals to us what God is like. He interprets to our minds and hearts the God who is our Father.”

D. AN INDWELLING SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. John 4:23-24; 15:26-27.

“Spirit of Truth,
Teach us the way to find,
For in thy light our eyes
Need be no longer blind.

“Spirit of Joy,
Thy radiance enthrone,
Until our lives reflect
The glory of thine own.

“Spirit of Light,
Guide us upon our way,
Dispel our night, and bring
The wonder of thy day.

“Spirit of Love,
From self our hearts set free
To serve the least of men,
In service given to Thee.”

—*Short.*

“We cannot get far away from God. (Ps. 139:7-12.) He is not far. He is here. This Spirit for whom there is no better name than the Spirit of Jesus is our continual companion. There is no friend with whom we deal more directly and more continually than with Him. Every time we open an inspiring book and devoutly study it, the Spirit is pleading for entrance. Every time

we pray, He stands at the door and knocks. Every time some child in need, or some great cause demanding sacrifice, lays claim on us, this Spirit is crying to be let in. Men's hunger for food, their love for family and friends, are not more direct, concrete, immediate experiences than our dealings with this Spirit of our Lord. He is not only God the Father. He is God the Spirit, striving to dwell within us and work through us."

"If God speak to thee in the summer air,
The cool, swift breath thou leanest forth to feel
Upon thy forehead—dost thou feel it God?
Nay, but the Wind; and when heart speaks to heart,
And face to face, when friends meet happily,
And all is merry, God is also there;—"

—King, *"The Disciples."*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you see God doing in these days?
2. If only one word were allowed with which to sum up Christianity, what would that word be?
3. If God is like Jesus, why is progress not more sure and definite? Where is the trouble?
4. In what condition of mind is the man who wakes up to the enormous needs of this world without seeing the divine reinforcements at hand in God?
5. Do you wish that you could see God? Why is it far better that you cannot? Can you really see a human personality? How do persons reveal themselves? Have you ever in times of crisis been suddenly aware of God to an unusual degree? What made Him seem so real to you then?
6. How does Jesus help you to feel that God is a person?
7. To what extent do you trust God's help in your personal life? What does Sidney Lanier mean by "I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God"?
8. Put into a definite statement your idea of God.

V. THE BUILDERS' FAITH IN CHRIST

"The greatest fact in history is Jesus Christ. In a remarkable way Jesus has won the world's devotion. He has done this by the drawing power of his matchless character, and his revealing to the world what God is like. For He lived the human life of God.

" 'Follow me,' He said. There can be no other way of knowing Him.

"The great matter is that Jesus believed that God was willing to take the human soul and make it new and young and clean again. But the human soul did not believe it, till Jesus convinced it, and won it, by action of his own. 'The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost' and He did not come in vain.

" 'Jesus,' writes Doctor Fosdick, 'has the most joyous idea of God that ever was thought of.' That joyous sense of God he has given to his followers, and it stands in vivid contrast with the feelings men have toward God in the other religions. Christianity is the religion of joy. The New Testament is full of it.

"To see God—to know God—that is what Jesus means—to get away from all the fusses and troubles of life into the presence of God, and to know He is ours; to see Him smile, to realize that He wants us to stay there, that He is a real Father with a Father's heart, that his love is on the same wonderful scale as every one of his attributes, and in reality far more intelligible than any of them. That is the picture Jesus draws. The sheer incredible love of God, the wonderful change it means for all life, that is his teaching and He encourages us 'to enjoy God for ever,' as Jesus Himself does. Those who learn his secret enjoy God in reality. Wherever they see God with the eyes of Jesus, it is joy and peace. And they realize with deepening emotion that this also is God's gift.

“Perhaps when we begin to understand what is meant by the Incarnation we may find that omnipotence has a great deal more to do than we have supposed with natural sympathy and the genius for entering into the sorrows and suffering of other people.

“The heart of friendship and the heart of the Incarnation are in essence the same thing—giving oneself in frankness and love to Him who will accept and by them winning him who refuses.

“The recurrence of the sweet and deep name, Father, unveils the secret of his being. His heart is at rest in God. Rest in God is the very note of all his being, of all his teaching, the keynote of all prayer in his thought. ‘Our Father, who art in heaven,’ our prayers are to begin, and perhaps we are not to go on until we realize what we are saying in that great form of speech. It is certain that as those words grow for us into the full stature of their meaning for Jesus, we shall understand in a more intimate way what the whole gospel is in reality.”—*Glover, “The Jesus of History.”*

“Fight the good fight with all thy might,
Christ is thy life, and Christ thy right.
Lay hold on life and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

“Run the swift race, through God’s good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek his Face.
Life with its way, before thee lies,
Christ is thy path, and Christ thy prize.

“Cast care aside, lean on thy guide,
His boundless mercy will provide,
Trust, and thy trusting soul shall prove,
Christ is its life, and Christ its love.

“Faint not nor fear, his arms are near,
He changes not, and thou art dear,
Only believe and thou shalt see,
That Christ is all in all to thee.”

—*Monsell.*

O Christ, we thank Thee that Thou art! We thank Thee that Thou art here! We do not require that we should see Thee. We do not ask to touch Thee. We only pray that Thou wilt come into our hearts as Thou hast come through all the ages to men

and women when they cried to Thee, and flood them with thy radiant joy. Amen.

Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead, the great shepherd of the sheep, with the blood of the everlasting covenant, even our Lord Jesus Christ, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.—Heb. 13:20.

JESUS CHRIST

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

A. AS SON OF THE FATHER—REVEALING GOD TO MAN.

1. Conscious of his relationship.

“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”—Luke 2:49.

“Thou art my beloved Son.”—Luke 3:22.

Advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:52; Heb. 5:8; John 5:17.

2. Making his conscious relationship the way by which we come to know the Father. John 14:6; 10:1-18; Heb. 10:19-25.

“O Thou, who art the perfect Way
Be Thou our guide.
Grant that we make a road this day,
So straight and wide,
That having cleared our hearts from sin
We may prepare thy way within.”

3. “Our Father, who art in heaven,” the kind of Father that Jesus knows.

a. Interested in all the beautiful things that we have.
Matt. 6:30; 10:29.

b. Loving and caring for us more than we can comprehend. Matt. 10:30; Luke 12:30. The thought on which Jesus lays great emphasis in his teaching about God is that God cares about you and me more than we can possibly

imagine. It is not easy to believe; we can believe it only as we learn it from Jesus.

- c. Having faith in us. Luke 19:1-10.
- d. Able to do all things for us. Matt. 19:23-26; 7:7-11; 11:27-30.
- e. A Father, the discovery of whom is beyond all value. Matt. 13:44, 46.

“What is the innermost thing in a father’s relation to his children?” The enjoyment of the child. The grappling of the little mind with big things, odd ways in which gratitude and affection express themselves. Jesus says God is as real a father as anybody else; and loves his children because they are real; because they are not clever, because they do make such queer and imperfect prayers, because they need Him and they fill a place in his heart. What is Jesus’ “good news”? The gospel of God and man needing each other and finding each other.

B. THE STRONG MAN AMONG MEN—REVEALING MAN TO MAN.

1. By his understanding of them. “Crowds had always an appeal for Jesus. When they came about Him they claimed Him and possessed Him.” He understood their physical needs. (Matt. 14:14; 20:9; 23:14; Mark 5:43; 8:3; Luke 14:12, 13.) “People despaired of the masses and left them alone. They did not know that the Father also cares for these children.” Jesus understood their hunger for God. “Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment?” (Matt. 5:22; 9:36; Luke 7:34; 19:10; 15:5.) He understood the temptation that money brought with it, and he also understood how greatly it could be used for good. (Luke 16:9, 20; 15:8-10; Matt. 20:15.) He understood the weakness of men. (Matt. 15:8, 14, 19; Matt. 23:27; Luke 22:31; Matt. 19:21). He also understood as no one else has ever done, how great

possibilities there were in just ordinary people. (Luke 19:1-10; Matt. 4:18-20; 16:17-19; 9:9.)

2. By serving them.

Feeding, healing, teaching them, He was always serving them, even as He would have them serve one another. He put his finger on the weak spots in their lives, He always told them the truth, He forgave sins, He started them on the way to a new life of purity and joy. He had faith in them to carry on his work. (Find references to prove that He did these things.) “His belief in men shows in his choice of the twelve. He trusts to them the supremest tasks men ever had assigned to them. Jesus was always at his leisure for individuals; that was the natural outcome of his faith in men. What else is the meaning of his readiness to spend Himself in giving the utmost spiritual truth—no easy task as experience shows us—even to a solitary listener!”

C. THE VICTOR OVER THE WORLD, SIN AND DEATH.

1. He accepted the world as it was; the necessary conditions of man's life. He saw human misery and need widespread as we do, but He believed, taught and lived in a faith in the Fatherhood of God which was greater than the need and wretchedness.

Your Heavenly Father knows. (Matt. 6:32.) With God all things are possible. (Mark 10:27.) “O ye of little faith! Whose sea is it? Whose wind is it? Whose children are you? Cannot you trust your Father to control his wind and his sea?” (Matt. 8:26.)

2. Sin—conquered the temptation to sin in Himself. (Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15, 16.)

Conquered the power of sin in others by

Intercession—As He walked down the street he met sin as we do, He loathed it as we do, but He did not shut his heart to it. He let the sins and sufferings of people in upon Him, and carried them, people,

sin, loathsomeness, all to God. That was intercession, and led Him into a realization that He must bear their sins on the cross. He lived with the disciples, He loved them, He prayed for Peter. (Luke 22:32.) He watched, listened to them all, carried them to God in prayer, and came to know that they could be transformed only by his death on the cross.

“Nay, but much rather let me, late returning,
Bruised of my brethren, wounded from within,
Stoop with sad countenance and blushes burning,
Bitter with weariness and sick with sin.

“Then as I weary me and long and languish,
Nowise availing from that pain to part—
Desperate tides of the whole great world’s anguish
Forced through the channels of a single heart,

“Straight to thy presence, get me and reveal it.
Nothing ashamed of tears upon thy feet,
Show the sore wound and beg thine hand to heal it,
Pour thee the bitter, pray thee for the sweet.

“Then with a ripple and a radiance thro’ me
Rise and be manifest, O Morning Star!
Flow on my soul, thou Spirit, and renew me,
Fill with thyself, and let the rest be far.”

—Myers, “*St. Paul.*”

3. Death. 1 Cor. 15:20, 21; 15:55-58; Col. 3:1-4.

The great fact of the resurrection is the Living Christ. The question as to whether it is a physical, supernatural or spiritual resurrection is of little importance. Back of every great force is a great power. Back of Christianity is the power of the Risen, Living Lord.

“Through love to light! O wonderful the way
That leads from darkness to the perfect day!
From darkness and from sorrow of the night
To morning that comes singing o’er the sea.
Through love to light! Through light, O God, to Thee,
Who art the love of love, the Eternal light of light!”

—Gilder, “*After-song.*”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was moving on before them, and they began to wonder, and as they followed they began to be afraid." But it is Jesus. They love Him. They follow and they begin to understand. How far are we prepared to go in sharing Jesus' experience? Shall we stop when we begin to be afraid? What will determine our possibility of understanding Him?
2. Some people say that what we need to-day is a greater emphasis on Christ's teaching and his way of living, and less on his resurrection. What do you say about this?
3. How do you explain the remark of a returned soldier who said that while in France in the trenches he had a real sense of peace and trust in God? He felt that God was near him, and would take care of him, but he did not think of Christ at all.
4. How much is involved in Jesus' name "Father"? Less or more than the word means in the case of a human father? What is the attitude of a child to his father?

VI. THE BUILDERS' FAITH IN THE BIBLE

"The Bible is alive because it comes out of life. You always hear voices whenever you go near the Bible. Sometimes you hear men talking with eager zest. Sometimes you hear them pleading. Sometimes you hear them weeping. Sometimes you hear them singing. But you always hear their armies marching. Workers are laboring. Judges are hearing complaints. Kings are ruling. People are busy about the interests of life. There is a stir and a movement everywhere. And above all the human voices is the high command of that great voice which speaks with the authority that comes from the Master of life Himself. In the Bible, human life becomes articulate. And deeper than that, in the Bible, God becomes articulate, speaking in the language of men."—*Hough, "A Living Book in a Living Age."*

"Here is no book dropped down from heaven, but something that has come up out of the life of the people. Here are the tales of its ancient heroes. Here is the story of its wars and oppressions. Here are the wise maxims of all its sages, the stirring sermons of its preachers, the book of its songs and prayers and its laws of every part of life. It is no book of the dead letter. It throbs with life. Prick it anywhere and it bleeds. Here are the prayers and hopes and tears and longings, the story of sin and failure, the story of high aspiration and splendid faith and deed. Because it is a human book, there is real history here. The life is bound up with other life, and knows movement and progress. The movement is not always upward. The great prophets are like mountain peaks and the land slopes away on this side as on that. But the forward look is always there, and dawn yields at last to the full day and we move up to Christ. And how intensely human

the men are whom we meet : Isaiah, with his vision and his boldness ; Hosea, with his tragic life ; Amos, outspoken and fearless ; Micah, with his passion for men and righteousness ; Jeremiah, with his mingled tenderness and strength ! And when we come to the highest of all, the human element is not least, but richest. In all this human book, the most human part is the Gospels. Look at their pictures from the life of our Lord, helpless child and loving mother, growing boy and anxious parents ; the friends and the craving for sympathy and companionship, hunger and weariness, the hours of prayer, the garden with its struggle, and its crying, and the words upon the cross.

“And it is the universal book. It belongs to every age and every nation, and it speaks to every need. Born in the East and clothed in oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is a servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is the son of God. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of peace for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the day of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people, and its counsels whispered in the ear of the lowly. The wicked and the proud tremble at its warning, but to the wounded and the penitent it has a mother’s voice. It has woven itself into our deepest affections, and colored our dearest dreams. Above the cradle and beside the grave its great words come to us uncalled. They fill our prayer with power larger than we know, and the beauty of them lingers on our ear long after the sermons which they adorned have been forgotten.”—*Rall, “A Working Faith.”*

THE BIBLE

- A. A LIBRARY OF MANY KINDS OF BOOKS, a classic of selected material, translated into our tongue, full of character and power.

1. HISTORY of the Hebrew people as a nation being led by the hand of God.
2. PROPHECY. Sermons of the prophets bound up with the national history, containing bits of their life history, their call to their work, struggles, responses. The prophets were great reformers, preachers of righteousness, pointing out to the people of their own generation, their injustice to the weak, their disloyalty to Jehovah.
3. STORIES. Ruth, story of family loyalty, a tradition cherished in Bethlehem as an interesting chapter in David's family history. Esther, story of race loyalty. Friendship stories: Abraham, the friend of God; David and Jonathan; Samuel and Eli; Jesus and his friends. Beginning stories: Beginnings of life, sin, death, found in Genesis. Missionary story: Jonah.
4. POETRY. Job, a great drama: the thirty-first chapter one of the greatest descriptions of righteousness found in all literature; a great literary drama, teaching the value of independent thought, showing the necessity for men to be honest with themselves. It helps us to-day to see with our own eyes, to think things out for ourselves and to follow the truth wherever it may lead. Psalms, songs that have furnished bridal hymns, battle songs, pilgrim marches, penitential prayers, public praises of every nation in Christendom. Psalms 120-134 are the songs of the pilgrimages, sung on journeys up to Jerusalem, full of love for city, and trust in God's care. Psalms 42-49, 50, 84-87, and 73-83 are some of the songs used in choruses in public worship.
5. NEW TESTAMENT. Books of "good news," of the coming of Jesus Christ, his life on earth, his teachings and works, the founding of his Church by his loyal followers, told by different men in different ways, but containing in spite of the differences a very real unity because of the remarkable love for a remarkable person. The authors are all dominated by a passionate

loyalty to Jesus and a desire to spread abroad among men his ideas, his way of living. The influence of Jesus caused Paul to undertake his missionary campaigns, in the midst of which he wrote his letters to the churches. It created an intense desire to perpetuate his teachings and personal influence by the writing of the Gospels, which bring us face to face with Jesus Christ.

B. A RECORD OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCES.

1. These experiences center around God. They are important because of the experiences themselves, regardless of the ways in which they are recorded. God put Himself into people's lives and put into their hearts a desire to tell others, but He let them tell it in their own way, using their own figures of speech and their own choice of words.
2. They tell of a growing experience of God. From a tribal deity on Mount Sinai, He grows to be a God who is a "Spirit, worshipped neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth." (John 4:21-24.) From a champion in battle, a God of war, He comes to be known as a God of love, the Father God. (John 3:16.)

C. A STANDARD OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE—a laying down of principles, not laws or systems. We cannot follow the Levitical laws, because they belong to another age, but we can follow the Ten Commandments, because they are great principles of life. We find in the Bible the record of other people's relationship to God, and know what our relationship may be. But we cannot govern our lives to-day by rules that great people of the Bible laid down to govern their followers. From Paul's relationship to Jesus, we know what ours may be, but we cannot govern our women according to his rules for women. The New Testament Church contained the faith, hope and love that ought to abide in the Church

of all time, but its method of organization is not binding on us to-day.

D. CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE.

1. Knowledge of it. Luke 4: 16, 17; Matt. 13: 54.
2. Use of it.
 - a. Quoted Old Testament passages, especially from Hosea and Isaiah.
 - b. Fulfilled—"not to destroy but to fulfil." (Matt. 5: 17-20.) Give illustrations of ways in which Christ fulfilled the Scriptures.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Every person has her own Bible within the Bible. What is your Bible?
2. In what ways does a growing Christian enlarge her Bible? Are all parts of the Bible equally important? Did you ever read the book through from beginning to end? Would you suggest that young Christians read their Bibles in that way?
3. What makes the Bible great above all other books?
4. Read Matt. 5: 17-20. How do you explain those words of Jesus? Does a responsibility for fulfilling Christ's teachings rest on us to-day?
5. Read Judges 6: 11, 12; 1 Sam. 3: 1-4, 10; John 17: 20-23; Rev. 22: 17. Does the Bible have a special message for an age of democracy? What is the relation between faith in people and the democratic movement?

VII. THE BUILDERS' FAITH IN THE CHURCH

"The church has come singing down the ages."

—*Carlyle.*

"We thank thee that thy church, unsleeping,
While earth rolls onward into light,
Through all the world her watch is keeping,
And rests not now by day or night.

"As o'er each continent and island
The dawn leads on another day,
The voice of prayer is never silent,
Nor dies the strain of praise away.

"The sun, that bids us rest, is waking
Our brethren 'neath the western sky;
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high."

—*Ellerton.*

"From the very beginning the growth of the Christian faith and the life of Christian men have been inseparable from the Christian Church. In her bosom the saints of all ages have been nurtured. The noblest lives of our race, far-famed or humble, have gained their faith through her message, and their strength in her fellowship. She has given birth to schools and hospitals, and every manner of philanthropy; she has inspired the vast majority of those who have wrought in great reform or gracious ministry. The greatest treasure of our race, the story of Christ and of his first followers, was brought forth by her devotion and handed down by her care. Wherever Christian faith and life have gone, it has been by her missionary zeal. And nowhere do we find the Christian religion surviving without the Christian Church.

"The church brings to men the vision of God, forgiveness of sin and fellowship with God. It gives them the ideal of life, and then

supplies the power to achieve that ideal. And last of all, it inspires them with the vision of the Kingdom, and sends them out with the passion for service.

“The church of to-morrow will have power with men just so far as it shall have the spirit of Jesus Christ. If it shall be loyal to the truth, filled with the spirit of service and love, ruled by a passion for justice and right, and the service of men, then it shall be the church of power, with such an authority as it has never had before. And this will make the united Church of to-morrow for which we are praying. For the unity, like the authority, must come from the nature of Christianity itself. No authority of pope or council can give it, no agreement as to organization or creed can bring it about. It must be the unity of the inner spirit, a common loyalty to Jesus Christ, a deeper devotion to the great task of serving men and bringing about his Kingdom.”—*Rall, “A Working Faith.”*

“The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation by water and the word;
From heaven He came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.”

—*Stone.*

THE CHURCH

MATT. 16: 13-18; ACTS 2: 41-47

In this day of much criticism of the Church, and agitation concerning its failures, we approach it as those who are in it, and in whose lives it has played a definite part. We consider our reasons for keeping our faith in it, and our loyalty to it.

A. PLACE OF SPIRITUAL BIRTH AND NOURISHMENT.

Heritage from our fathers. Our lives have unconsciously been nurtured by its hymns, prayers, Bible truths; there first we heard God speak to us, there we made our first public confession, there we first began to work for others. In its schools and colleges many of us were educated.

B. PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP—"I believe in the communion of saints."

1. Social fellowship.

The growing life is one of constantly closer relations, deepening interdependence. Notice Jesus' desire for fellowship.

a. Took the disciples with Him when He went to spend the night in prayer.

b. "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations."

c. "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you."

d. "Could ye not watch this one little hour with me?"
The first church had no creed, it had just a faith and a fellowship. (Acts 2:42.) The fellowship was inseparable from the faith.

2. Democratic fellowship.

The church universal is neither Baptist nor Methodist, Presbyterian nor Episcopal, but the Church of Christ. It asks no questions as to wealth or social standing of those who come to its doors. Within men are led into the presence of God, before whom nothing counts but a pure and penitent heart.

3. Comprehensive.

It shows the whole round world belted with prayer and praise, and tells us that we are a part of all this. "Here are the thronging worshippers of Korea lately emerged from paganism, here is the swift growing host scattered all through the great Chinese republic, here are the thatched chapels of the Philippines, the huts of Africa, and the great cathedrals of the ancient world. And all the great heroes of the faith, and all the unnamed multitude of humble, loyal lives belong to that same fellowship, and all belong to Him."—*Rall*, "*A Working Faith*."

C. PLACE OF WORSHIP.

1. "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word"—
Here we get the word. "The hunger deeper than that for bread, and the questions reaching beyond those of work and wage are met." Here we are led into the presence of the God whom we can worship. "This vital faith is not simply a gift, but an attainment." It grows under the influence that comes from united worship with others.
2. The place where we keep the two beautiful sacraments, the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

D. JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHURCH OF HIS DAY. Luke 4: 15, 16; Matt. 13: 54; Mark 1: 2.

The church of Jesus' day was not as sincere or righteous as our churches. Jesus found much in the temple services that distressed Him. There was less efficiency in the church, less social service going out from it. But it was Jesus' custom to go to the synagogue. He took part in its services. He attended the appointed feasts of the national church. Why did he go to the synagogue? His private devotions he pursued on the mountain top. Can it be that he received strength from the synagogue? Was there a value for Him in the give and take of comradeship, the revelation of human needs and aspirations? Surely here He saw humanity at its best, and saw where it was missing its way even when it was at its best. Does the fact that Jesus went to the synagogue to give as well as to receive, account in some degree for the value of the service to Him? Have you ever looked into the faces of people during the hour of worship, and known that they, too, were missing the way? Has that knowledge made you feel that here was a responsibility that you ought not to shirk, or has it meant for you a joyous opportunity to try to help another to find the way?

E. OUR PERSONAL OBLIGATIONS TO IT.

Shall we serve our church by staying away, or by attending her services, and becoming a part of her life?

“I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go unto the house of Jehovah.
Our feet are standing
Within Thy gates, O Jerusalem.”

—*Psalm 122 : 1-2.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Would you be willing to live in a community without a church? Why or why not?
2. How far is an organized institution, like the church, necessary, if Christians are to solve such problems as class, race, national rivalries and antagonisms, poverty, dishonesty, spiritual unrest?
3. If a person is going to do his most effective work in bringing in the Kingdom, must he ally himself with a church? Why or why not?
4. Why does alliance with a church tend against provincialism? How far do the backwardness and inefficiency of a local church destroy the possibility of working through it? What responsibility to a church has an individual member?
5. What can the Christian institutions, organized for united work, do to help the church and bring about the Kingdom?

VIII. THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN OUR TASKS

“For prayer will in time make the human countenance its own divinest altar; years upon years of true thoughts, like ceaseless music shut up within, will vibrate along the nerves of expression until the lines of the living instrument are drawn into correspondence and the harmony of visible form matches the unheard harmonies of the mind.”

Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion,
And unto Thee shall the vow be performed;
O Thou that hearest prayer,
Unto Thee shall all flesh come.

—*Psalm 65 : 1, 2.*

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High,
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him.
I will set him on high, because he hath known my name,
He shall call upon me, and I will answer him,
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him,
With long life will I satisfy him,
And show him my salvation.

—*Psalm 91 : 1, 14-16.*

Ask of me and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

—*Psalm 2 : 8.*

“To pray together, in whatever tongue or ritual, is the most tender brotherhood of hope and sympathy that men can contract in this life.”—*De Stael.*

“O Thou, by whom we come to God,—
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.”

PRAYER

NEH. 2: 1-6, 11-18; LUKE 6: 12, 13

A. DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF WORK. Neh. 2: 1-6.

Note the two words of action. How did Nehemiah differ from those of us who pray "May thy Kingdom come," and then leave to our Father the whole task of bringing it in? Cf. Ex. 14: 15. Recall the circumstances. The Israelites had been for only a short time on the march, but were already weary. Looking back, they saw the Egyptians pursuing; looking ahead, they saw the sea. Bitterly rebuking Moses, they said, "Were there no graves in Egypt, that you brought us out to drown us in the sea?" Moses fell on his face and prayed, but God said, "Do not stand still and pray. The way lies ahead. Plunge in and move forward." It was not that Moses was to stop praying. He was to pray and "move forward." Prayer must not be substituted for work, but one must combine them as did Nehemiah, the master builder. But we *made our prayer* unto our God and we *set a watch* against them day and night. (Neh. 4: 9.) Remember the Lord and *fight*. (Neh. 4: 14.) In his autobiography, Frederick Douglass says, "I used often to pray for freedom, but that prayer was not answered, until it got down into my heels and I ran away."

B. DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF THINKING. James 1: 5-8.

Have you ever wanted God to think out your problems for you? "Consider what this world would become if everything could be accomplished by prayer. What if men could sail their ships as well by prayer alone as by knowledge of the science of navigation, could swing their bridges as firmly by petition only, as by studying engineering laws; could light their houses, send their messages and work out their philosophies by mere entreaty? If life is to mean development and dis-

cipline, some things must be impossible until men think, no matter how hard men pray.”—*Fosdick*, “*The Meaning of Prayer*.”

C. PRAYER IS COMMUNION WITH GOD—an expression of our fellowship with Him. John 17.

God’s great gift in prayer is Himself. “The prayer of men is his great desire. For such fellowship He made the worlds.” We talk with God as we do with our friends, sometimes for the sheer joy of talking, loving, enjoying, thinking with Him, sometimes waiting on Him, just resting in his presence without words, worshipping Him. Often it means confession, and a receiving of the forgiveness that He is so ready to give. Sometimes it means laying before Him our difficulties and other people’s difficulties, the things that we must help straighten out and the things too great for us to manage, and always it means fellowship with God, a growing nearness to Him, understanding and loving Him better, and from it we go out to work for the coming of his Kingdom, with

1. Vision.

“If chosen souls could never be alone
In deep mid-silence open doored to God,
No great thing ever had been dreamed or done,
The nurse of full grown souls in solitude.”

—*Lowell*.

2. Power. (John 14:12; 15:5.)

“Lord, what a change within us, one short hour,
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchèd grounds refresh as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear,
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong
Or others—that we are not always strong;

That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us in prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

—*Trench.*

3. Joy. (John 16:22.)

"They looked unto Him, and were radiant."

—*Psalm 34:5.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is it, since so many prayers go up daily for the coming of the Kingdom, that it comes so slowly?
2. How far does the influence of prayer reach? What is more important in prayer than asking for special favors? What do you think of the War-Time League of Intercession? Why do we fail to practice intercession?
3. What distinction do you make between private and public prayer? How should they differ? How does united prayer help to marshal the moral forces of the universe?
4. To what extent is victory in a great public battle of life dependent upon previous victory in an unseen battle? What was the relation of the Master's habit of prayer to the controlling purpose of his life? What great issues of life must be fought out in secret prayers?

IX. THE NEED OF A GROWING VISION

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”—Proverbs 29:18.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”—Phil. 4:8.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith Jehovah
That I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind;
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall have dreams.”

—Acts 2:17 (*Weymouth*).

“Once in Royal David’s City,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a Mother laid her Baby
In a manger for his bed;
Mary was that Mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child,

“And through all his wondrous childhood,
He would honor and obey,
Love, and watch the lowly maiden
In whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be,
Mild, obedient, good as He.

“For He is our childhood’s pattern,
Day by day like us He grew,
He was little, weak and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew,
And He feeleth for our sadness
And He shareth in our gladness.

“And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through his own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above,
For He leads his children on
To the place where He is gone.”

—*Alexander.*

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, ruler of heaven and earth, who hast opened our eyes more fully to see thy Love for all mankind, so help us by thy Spirit, fervently to make Thee known throughout the world. Grant to us, that abounding more and more in prayer, in labor and in giving, we may help to hasten the time when the knowledge of Thee shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Amen.

“We rise by the things that are under our feet,
By what we have mastered of good and of gain,
By the pride deposed, and the passion slain,
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.”

“To keep fellowship with God unimpeded by sin, uninterrupted by neglect, to think habitually, as though God were, instead of casually believing that He is, to practice love continually until love grows real; and to arrange life conscientiously as though the doing of God’s will were life’s first business—such things alone make spiritual growth a possibility.”

“Becoming Christian from motives of fear as many do, we should press on to a fellowship with God in which fear vanishes in divine friendship and cooperation. Choosing the Christian life for self-centered reasons, because it can do great things for us, we should press on to glory in it as a cause on which the welfare of the race depends and for which we willingly make sacrifice. Beginning with narrow ideas of service to our friends and neighbors, we should press on to genuine interest in the world field, in international fraternity, and in Christ’s victory over all mankind.”

A. THE NEED FOR VISION. Mark 8:22-26.

“Lord Christ, thy second touch our hearts demand,
Each separate soul to see, his wounds to salve,
His wants to understand, and lead him home to Thee.”

Jesus' *growing* vision. Trace the growth of Jesus' vision of his life work, go with Him on his first pilgrimage to Jerusalem, come out with Him to the banks of the Jordan, and receive with Him the revelation of his Messiahship. Follow Him into the wilderness where He chooses Isaiah's vision of the suffering servant of Jehovah as his interpretation of his Kingship, and go with Him all the way through the busy days of service, into the Garden of Gethsemane and even to the cross on Calvary, and then try to understand his world message to his disciples as they heard it in Galilee. Matt. 28:16-20.

B. LAWS OF GROWTH. Mark 4:28.

"Let no man think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done:—
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it,
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun."

—Myers, "*St. Paul.*"

C. MEANS OF GROWTH.

1. Reading.

Devotional study of the Bible.

Reading of newspapers—necessary to world fellowship.

Biography—for inspiration from lives of great people.

History—to see God in history and progress of the world.

Poetry—to comprehend spiritual beauty.

2. Thinking.

Not merely read, but *study*, discuss, *think*.

"Talk to wise people but do not regard their decisions as final." Make your own decisions under God's guidance. "For the Spirit which God has given us is not a spirit of cowardice, but one of power and of love and of sound judgment."—2 Tim. 1:7 (Weymouth).

"Before any important decision, when the evidence is all in, pause for a little and let God speak."

3. Practical experience of doing things in

- a.* Church—helps toward growth in reverence, humility, loyalty, self-forgetfulness, and the spirit of friendliness toward others.
- b.* Community—nearly every community will furnish a brotherhood made up of people of many races and many lands.
- c.* Institutions and movements making for social welfare.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Does that person grow more rapidly who does things from a sense of duty or under the influence of love? Why?
2. Can one find in Jesus' friendship all that satisfies his desire for growth? How does a person know whether he is growing?
3. Is it right and natural for one to want to grow in personality and power? What makes a person great?
4. What kind of control is greater than self-control?
5. At what times have I been most conscious of God? Under what conditions have I grown most in my spiritual life during the past years? What are the greatest hindrances to my spiritual growth?

X. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE BUILDERS GO FORTH

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory even as from the Lord the Spirit.”—2 Cor. 3:17-18.

“Find a friend, believe in him and love him; see a great cause and give yourself to its work; feel the power of a book and saturate yourself with its spirit; find a brotherhood of spirits like yours in aspiration and join it; and loving your friend, serving your cause, absorbing your book, and cooperating with your brotherhood, do not think too much about your own character, for your character will take care of itself. You cannot choose to be Christ-like and attain your choice by trying; but you can choose Christ for your Friend, his Kingdom for your Cause, the Bible for your Book; the Church for your Brotherhood, and those consciously chosen influences will unconsciously transform your life.”

“Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth; through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
And make me love Thee as I ought to love.

“Teach me to love Thee as thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The kindling of the heaven-descending Dove,
My heart an altar, and thy love the flame.”

—*Croly*.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.”—Gal. 5:22, 23.

“Jesus had the most joyous idea of God that ever was thought of. . . . The Gospels show clearly that this joyousness of Jesus overflowed in all the familiar ways, that everywhere are the signs of a radiant nature. . . . None but a joyful soul loves nature as Jesus did, watching the changing weather signals of an evening sky in summer or considering the lilies, how they grow, more beautiful than Solomon in all his glory. None but a joyful soul loves children as Jesus did, and finds in their artless and care-free company a solace and delight. Jesus must have been the most radiant man to be found in his day in Palestine. He must have carried with Him an atmosphere of glad good-will. Like springs of fresh water by the sea, even when the salt waves of sorrow went over Him, He must have come up again with inexhaustible kindness and joy.”—*Fosdick, “The Manhood of the Master.”*

“Surely He cometh, and a thousand voices
Call to the Saints, and to the deaf are dumb;
Surely He cometh, and the earth rejoices
Glad in his coming who hath sworn, I come.

“This hath He done, and shall we not adore Him?
This shall He do, and can we still despair?
Come let us quickly fling ourselves before Him,
Cast at his feet the burden of his care.

“Flash from our eyes the glow of our Thanksgiving,
Glad and regretful, confident and calm,
Then through all life and what is after living,
Thrill to the tireless music of a psalm.

“Yea, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed;
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.”

—*Myers, “St. Paul.”*

THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH THE BUILDERS GO FORTH

NEH. 4: 1-6; 1 COR. 15: 58

A. ENTHUSIASTIC COOPERATION—keep up morale.

1. Content—Morale means discipline, training, cohesion, the ability to move together. It means nerve, courage, dash, a spirit of enthusiasm and confidence. But it

means more than that. It means confidence in one's cause, faith in the right of righteousness to be triumphant, cheerfulness under trials, the assurance of victory for one's cause. It is a group quality. The weakest man determines the morale of the line. So it must mean confidence in one another, the ability to think and feel together; the *esprit de corps*, the power to do team work. See Eph. 4.

2. How attained—It comes from within, out of the hearts and convictions of men, from above, from the Spirit of God, from the sense of peace in God and the assurance that one is in line with his will.

“Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Help me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within thy arms,
And strong shall be my hand.

“My will is not my own,
Till Thou hast made it thine,
If it would reach a monarch's throne
It must its crown resign;
It only stands unbent,
Amid the clashing strife,
When on thy bosom it has leant,
And found in Thee its life.”

—Matheson.

3. How maintained.

- a. By replacing distrust and suspicion with the spirit of confidence.
- b. By thinking of the common welfare in place of our individual, self-centered thoughts.
- c. By the sacrificial attitude of mind which subordinates self-interest to a larger good.
- d. By enlisting all possible agencies for good:
Home
School

Press
Church—Sunday-school
Young People's societies
Clubs, organizations.

- B. PATIENCE, which is more than mere endurance. 1 Peter 2: 20-24; 2 Cor. 4: 16-18.

“Jesus’ courageous patience with undesirable situations and with the necessity of suffering sprang from his absolute trust in the good purpose of God. His task was to do the will of God for Him. The consequences were God’s responsibility and God would not fail to bring a worthy issue to all faithful work. Therefore the Master suffered patiently, endured courageously, sacrificed freely, labored hopefully, for He was sure that God was for Him and that no one ultimately could prevail against Him. He looked even upon his death as a part of the plan of God, and resolutely said, ‘Thy will, not mine.’ Such trust as this is necessary to such character; you cannot have the result in hopeful fortitude without having the cause in faith; without reliance on God a man may be a cynic or a stoic, but he cannot be one who endures and sacrifices with glad confidence that ‘All things work together for good.’ ”—*Fosdick, “The Manhood of the Master.”*

- C. THE SPIRIT OF JOY. Phil. 4: 4-7; Rom. 8: 35-39; John 15: 11; Acts 2: 46.

Jesus’ joy was at heart this satisfaction which comes from finding lost and needy people and helping them out. This source of exhaustless delight is at every man’s hand every day and yet how many let its treasure go unclaimed!

Is your life by its radiation of real good cheer and good will bearing testimony to your friendship with the Master?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

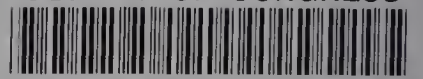
1. How does one learn to do teamwork? In how far should a person who is the accepted leader, carry out other people's ideas instead of his own?
2. What kind of a spirit is dominant in us when we fail to rejoice over the success of those who have surpassed us in that which we ourselves take pride in doing well? How can we get this spirit of genuine appreciation of the work of other people?
3. Read Gal. 2: 11-16. What kind of a spirit is necessary in order to tell people frankly and kindly that they are not living true to their ideals?
4. Should we ever try to cooperate with people who are working from unworthy or insincere motives?
5. What is our attitude when people tell us where we are weak or have failed? Do our hurt feelings come from wounded pride, or sorrow because we have failed to do our utmost in helping to build the Kingdom of God?
6. Does a Christian necessarily have a sense of joyous fellowship with God? Is it a matter of temperament? If one is unsatisfied without it, how can she attain unto it?
7. How can we help one to find the fulness of life in Christ without intruding on his personality? How important a part of Paul's work was his personal sharing of the reality of his friendship with Christ?

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